

REMARKS

The Office Action dated July 2, 2007 has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments to the claims, and the following remarks, are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Following the current amendment, claims 1, 2, 5, 7-11, 14, 16-20, including independent claims 1, 10, and 19, are currently pending. Specifically, Applicants herein amend claims 1, 5, 8, 10, 14, 17 and 19 and cancel claims 3, 4, 6, 12, 13, 15, and 21 without disclaimer or prejudice to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. It is respectfully submitted that the current amendments add no new subject matter to the present application and serve only to place the present application in better condition for examination. Entry of the amendments and reconsideration of pending claims 1, 2, 5, 7-11, 14, 16-20 are respectfully requested.

Claim Objection/Rejections

The Office Action, beginning at page 2, rejects claims 1-5, 7, 9-14, 16, and 18-21 as being allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,631,259 of Pecen et al. (the "Pecan" reference) in view of U.S. Published Patent Application No. 20040203775 of Bourdeaut et al. (the "Bourdeaut" reference). Beginning at page 6, the Office Action further rejects claims 8 and 17 as being allegedly unpatentable over Pecen and Bourdeaut in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,871,070 of Ejzak (the "Ejzak" reference). Applicants

believe that these rejections are now moot in view of the current amendments to the claims, as described below.

In particular, Applicants express great appreciation for the notice given at page 7 that claims 6 and 15 are currently objected to for depending from rejected claims but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. While Applicants believe that the recited embodiments of the present application may be differentiated from the teachings of Pecen, Bourdeaut, and Ejzak, Applicants herein amend the claims as directed in the Office Action to overcome the objection to claims 6 and 15 and to expedite prosecution and allowance of the pending claims. In particular, Applicants amend independent claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 6 and intervening claims 3 and 4 and amend independent claim 10 to include the limitations of claim 15 and the intervening claims 12-13.

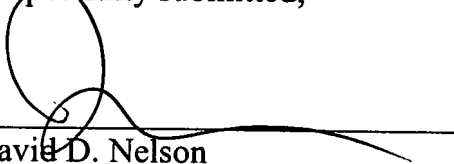
Applicants urge that independent claims 1 and 10 are now allowable following the present amendments because, as indicted in the Office Action, they recite limitations that are not disclosed in the cited references. Claims 2-5, 7, 9, 11, 14, and 16-18, which depend from either claim 1 or 10, are allowable on similar grounds. Applicants likewise amend independent claim 19 to include recitations that are similar to those of allowable claims 1 and 10. Reconsideration and allowance of amended claim 19 and its dependent claim 20 are respectfully requested as well.

As discussed above, each of the pending claims 1, 2, 5, 7-11, 14, 16-20, including independent claims 1, 10, and 19, recites subject matter which is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited references. Applicants submit that the recited subject matter is more than sufficient to render the invention non-obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. It is respectfully requested that independent claims 1, 10, and 19 and the related dependent claims be allowed in view of the above arguments, comments and remarks and that the present application be allowed to pass to issue.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper is not being timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account 50-2222.

Respectfully submitted,



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